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M. Bruner
4/17/02

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : Donald V. Smart

Art Unit : 2881

Serial No. : 09/633,837

Examiner : C. Jackson

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Title : PULSE CONTROL IN LASER SYSTEMS

Commissioner for Patents

Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Prior to examination, please amend the application as follows:

In the Background of the Invention:

Page 1, line 5, before "This invention relates to" begin a new paragraph and insert:

C1
--This application is a divisional (and claims the benefit of priority under 35 USC 120) of U.S. application serial no. 09/096,600, filed June 12, 1998. The disclosure of the prior application is considered part of (and is incorporated by reference in) the disclosure of this application.--

In the claims:

Amend claims 40 and 55 as follows:

Sub D2
C2
/ --40. (Twice amended) A method of operating a pulsed laser system comprising:
providing a pulsed laser system comprising a laser source and a switch configured to be closed to cause energy to be stored by the laser source for a desired period of time, and to be opened to allow energy to be emitted from the laser source during an emission period;
presetting a pre-selected pulse shape to be produced by the laser source, based on known properties of a target material to be processed on a workpiece;
selecting, independently of the pre-selected pulse shape, a time interval between at least two successive transmissions of pulses onto the workpiece; and
pulsing the pulsed laser system by closing the switch for a fixed, predetermined period of time prior to each emission period regardless of the time interval between the at least two successive transmissions of pulses onto the workpiece, so as to cause the laser source to process